

I. INTRODUCTION

The field office carries out for an assigned circuit, (1) the original inspection and weighing of grain or the supervision or monitoring of these activities conducted by licensed inspectors (LI) under the U.S. Grain Standards Act of 1976, and (2) the permissive inspection of assigned agricultural commodities, including rice, under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended.

The incumbent is responsible for final protein determinations on products standardized under the Acts which are stored near or shipped to or from inspection points under field office jurisdiction and, if applicable, performs the full range of inspecting and weighing activities at grain handling facilities.

The incumbent is also responsible for carrying out the field office quality assurance program with respect to protein determinations.

II. Major Duties

Coordinates and maintains the protein testing program within the assigned geographic area. Monitors official protein inspections of agencies to assure accurate and consistent protein determinations. Performs onsite and follow-up evaluation of official agency equipment, procedures, recordkeeping, certification, and all other aspects of protein testing. Oversees licensing process of agency personnel and monitors training and examination requirements. Assures adherence to protein instructions at each service point/elevator supervised. Identifies and recommends any necessary corrective action to agencies' protein programs. Keeps field office manager (FOM) and the Quality Control Branch (QCB) informed of any information or problems related to protein.

Investigates protein complaints and provides written reports of findings. Establishes and maintains open and continuous communication with QCB to assure accuracy and consistency of protein determinations.

Determines the grade of grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs agency services in support of grain, rice, and related commodity markets. The services include (a) the original inspection and weighing of grain; (b) the permissive inspection, weighing, and checkloading of rice, pulses, processed grain products, and other assigned commodities; and/or (c) the technical supervision (oversight, reporting, and review) of grain and commodity inspection and weighing activities performed by licensed or contracted non-Federal inspectors.

The work is performed at a field office, FGIS laboratories, and at various locations within the area served by a field office. Work assignments are rotated between shifts and points of inspection within the area serviced. Also, assignments may be performed in other field offices which involve details and/or reassignment to a different geographical area involving commodities or market services differing from the original field office. In these cases, the incumbent may be required to be proficient in grading additional grains, be familiar with various types of weighing equipment, and perform the full range of weighing activities. Additionally, the incumbent may receive rotational assignments involving safety, equipment training, or other related functions of the field office.

The incumbent is responsible for his/her own transportation to and from assigned points of inspection and may be required to operate a motor vehicle on official business.

The work involves one or more of the following inspection functions and/or weighing activities:

A. Quality Assurance Program (Protein)

Conducts and maintains a quality assurance program established for the purpose of monitoring the accuracy of protein determinations made by field office agricultural commodity graders (ACG) and official agency (OA) personnel to ensure that an acceptable protein program is maintained within the field office circuit. The incumbent promotes the protein quality assurance program among ACG's and OA personnel by working closely with supervisory personnel and OA managers or other designated technical personnel. Explains and implements changes in FGIS protein procedures. Monitors and assesses the protein accuracy of individual ACG's and the overall proficiency of OA's. Provides full assessment of general and specific deficiencies found to exist within the circuit to the FOM. The incumbent collaborates with supervisory personnel in identifying training needs. Recommends, coordinates, and provides special protein training and technical direction to ACG's and OA personnel in order to achieve and maintain uniformity, proficiency, and adherence to established procedures within the circuit. The incumbent serves as the FOM's principal contact with the QCB and OA's concerning protein matters. Ensures that protein determinations made in appeal decisions rendered by the field office are consistent with current QCB guidelines and policies. Performs or provides technical assistance to others in resolving discrepancies/deviations in protein determinations. Participates with the FOM in analyzing and recommending solutions to unusual protein trends. The incumbent provides information to destination points on unusual protein patterns originating in the field office circuit or provides feedback to originating office. Administers protein related exams to OA personnel.

B. Federal Export Inspection

Performs original inspections and determines the grade of products standardized under the Acts or makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Also performs monitoring inspections and appeals of initial grade determinations. Duties typically include:

(1) Grading: Performs both mechanical measurements and visual inspections to establish the type and quality of the grain and related commodities. The analysis of sample portions of standardized products includes determining grading factors, such as: kind, class, subclass, damage, heat damage, foreign material, smut, insect infestation, odor, moisture, texture, milling degree, color, and other grading factors applicable to a particular grain or commodity. In addition, performs chemical and physical tests such as aflatoxin, falling numbers, minicolumn thin layer chromatography, bleach tests, and nuclear magnetic resonance tests whenever applicable.

The incumbent applies the official standard to determine and certify the grade of the product. The ACG explains and interprets grading procedures, methods, and factors to producers and members of the trade in order to assure maintaining proper compliance with the provisions of the Acts and official standards and regulations of the Department. Instructs and evaluates trainees or junior graders on the techniques of grading, mechanical determinations, sampling, and product characteristics. Graders may be required to perform sampling duties.

(2) Stowage Examinations: Conducts stowage examinations on shipholds, barges, hopper cars, and other containers to ensure cleanliness and acceptability of storage and handling facilities.

(3) Fumigation: Witnesses fumigations to ensure fumigants are applied according to Agency approved instructions.

C. State Delegation and Interior Inspection

Determines the grade on grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs grading to check the accuracy of licensed, non-Federal inspectors and to resolve appeals of initial grade determinations. Reviews grading procedures and methods used by licensees and supervises grades being assigned by LI's to samples of wheat, beans, peas, corn, oats, rice, rye, barley, lentils, soybeans, hay, sorghums, and other related commodities. In connection with grading, performs analysis of sample portion for grading factors such as: kind, class, subclass, damaged, heat damage, foreign material, smut, insect infestation, odor, moisture and texture, milling degree, color, and other grading factors applicable to a particular sample. Instructs LI's, technicians, and samplers in grading, sampling, and laboratory techniques. As necessary, corrects improper methods. Explains and interprets grading procedures, methods, and factors to licensed inspectors and members of the trade to maintain compliance with official standards and regulations. Conducts licensing examinations for non-Federal inspectors, technicians, and samplers. Conducts stowage examinations to ensure cleanliness and adequacy of storage and handling facilities. In addition, the incumbent may be required to perform sampling duties.

D. Inspection (Processed Products)

The incumbent samples, checkweighs, and checkloads processed products such as flour, cake mix, cornmeal, vegetable oils, and other processed products inspected under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. Samples and inspects nonfood components (containers, strappings, pallets, etc.) to ensure that they meet applicable specifications; interprets and utilizes the various Federal, military, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) specifications; employs sampling tables and selection rates; and performs plant sanitation inspections, and land carrier and shiphold examinations.

The incumbent is familiar with all commodity inspection forms common to the assigned field office. In addition, has responsibility for training of new ACG's and Agricultural Commodity Aides (ACA) as well as the licensing of contract samplers; discusses proper procedures with licensees; technically monitors contract samplers and State inspection personnel; arranges for contract sampling services and provides contract compliance reviews to include making corrective actions to assure adherence to standard procedures; and makes personal contacts with members of the trade, state inspection agencies, processors, etc., to discuss problems, inspection services, and regulations.

E. Equipment Checktesting

As assigned, inspects and checktests equipment and diverter samplers used for official inspection. Evaluates new sampling methods and equipment and periodically submits reports and recommendations on findings to supervisory personnel for further study.

F. Weighing

The incumbent may be required to perform either or both of the following weighing functions: (a) official weighing (class X), either at export or interior locations; (b) supervision of weighing (classes X or Y) by any delegated export state or designated agency.

Has responsibility for accurate weights and accurate documentation of events that support the official weight certificates. This includes detecting and identifying errors in the weighing system such as incorrect printouts on tapes or scale tickets of weight and identification information; failures to weigh or record total volume of grain; faulty weight results due to radio frequency interference, wind, improper venting, calibration or adjustment, power failures, poor housekeeping, damaged load receiving elements, and problems in the grain delivery systems. When remedial action is required, the incumbent is responsible for communicating with elevator employees and management officials and/or for notifying immediate supervisor so that action may be taken to immediately correct the situation or to discontinue official weighing on the scale or equipment. Observes elevator or scale technicians when certain repairs or corrections are made and performs routine test to determine the effect of repairs. Approves and signs the official weight certificates. Under state delegation, reviews and validates the conformance of State weighing to Federal standards.

III. FACTORS

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

A thorough and detailed knowledge of the principles, methods, official grade standards, and regulations applied in grain inspections. A thorough knowledge of the characteristics and common defects of wheat, other grains, or grain products being graded. Knowledge of the production, processing, storage, and transportation conditions and practices that directly affect product acceptability or grade of grain or grain products being graded.

Thoroughly developed skill in sampling, mechanical determination, and grading grains to make independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations.

Knowledge of and skill in explaining and demonstrating protein techniques and principles (Kjeldahl and NIR) in order to instruct field office and OA personnel on proper procedures; to provide advice on the factors which affect protein results; and to take or recommend corrective actions on misinterpretations of established protein procedures.

Practical knowledge of quality assurance principles and methods in order to maintain the integrity of the protein inspection program.

Knowledge of the official protein inspection process, including making independent decisions regarding normal daily protein evaluations. Has total familiarity with the types, class/varieties, quality, and condition of grain at each grain elevator.

Practical knowledge of the basic operational workings of the approved protein devices and ability to detect and interpret operational malfunctions which could affect the accuracy of the protein results as required at locations where protein services are performed under the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

The knowledge and skills are such that after a period of training and study, the ACG is capable of rotating from the protein function to other functions (e.g., from original grading and weighing to overseeing non-Federal inspectors or weighers, etc.).

Knowledge of FGIS safety standards and their application to daily operations.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The supervisor coordinates protein and other related activities and assigns work to the incumbent on a daily or weekly basis. Assignments are given in broad terms, indicating the location and general protein grading/inspection/weighing work to be performed.

The employee carries out the assignments without direct supervision, adapting work procedures to accommodate the specific situation. The employee independently applies the standards, procedures, and regulations, resolving nearly all technical problems regarding protein determinations. Occasional spot checks of actual protein analysis are used to review technical proficiency. Only highly controversial or precedent setting determinations are referred to the supervisor.

Reports and official certificates are periodically reviewed for adherence to normal procedures and for conformity to expected results.

Factor 3. Guidelines

The primary guides consist of the official grain standards and regulations, inspection, and protein manuals covering procedures and techniques, and supplemental instructions, both written and oral. The incumbent applies the standards, regulations, and procedures making immediate appropriate determinations, while receiving technical advice from the QCB.

Factor 4. Complexity

Assignments involve responsibility for monitoring the protein accuracy of field office and OA personnel. The employee must recognize deviations from established protein norms and acceptable protein results. Identifies probable causes of protein inconsistencies and develops, takes, or recommends corrective actions.

Assignments deal with a variety of grains and grain types (e.g., wheat, etc.), protein methodologies, maintenance, and operation of protein equipment, (e.g., NIRs, grinders, etc.),

scales and scale types (e.g., manual and electronic) and vary according to the nature of the assignment (e.g., sampling, original grading, original weighing, technical oversight of non-Federal inspectors, weighers, etc.). The volume and speed of the loading operation (e.g., involving ocean vessels being loaded for export) requires timely and accurate protein, grading, and weighing determinations.

The employee selects appropriate methods depending on the nature of each assignment, including necessary chemical or physical testing considering the type of grain or grain product in the case of grading, variety of grain in the case of protein, or considering the configuration of the elevator or facility and type of equipment in the case of weighing, or processed products inspection.

Management compliance reviews involve the entire range of technical, administrative, and management aspects of inspection activity. Various protein results, grade factors, and contract specifications must be analyzed to make final determinations; and a variety of processing or storage processes must be analyzed to inspect processed products or conduct or oversee weighing operations.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

The work involves applying the standards and regulations in determining the protein, quality, quantity, and general condition of grain and commodities. The incumbent issues weighing and inspection reports and official grade/criteria and weight certificates. The incumbent's protein quality assurance program responsibilities involve monitoring and improving the accuracy of protein determinations made by field office and OA personnel. Provides advice and technical direction on unusual protein problems or situations, including appeals. The incumbent's protein determinations are made in consultation with the FOM and are considered authoritative at the field office level. Since grain is traded on the basis of U.S. grades, protein, weights, and export contracts, the protein coordinator's work affects the financial interests of buyers, sellers, shippers, warehouses, and others having an economic interest in the product.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts

In addition to contacts with other Agency employees, the work includes relationships with employees and supervisors of grain elevators, shippers, licensed inspection agencies, sampling contractors, foreign trade groups, and similar firms operating in the marketing chain.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of industry personnel and resolve problems and conflicts to assure compliance with program regulations. Assists the supervisor in planning and scheduling work in cooperation with industry personnel. As assigned, instructs, evaluates, and advises new or lower grade employees on job techniques and skills in connection with protein, sampling, inspection, and weighing methods, and the use of protein equipment. Assures that lower grade employees perform protein analysis, sampling, inspection, and weighing functions in accordance with regulations.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

Phases of the work require considerable physical exertion. Obtaining samples involves climbing into trucks, barges, hopper cars, riding man lifts, etc.; using probes, pelicans, and similar sampling devices; and moving and lifting grain bags or sacks weighing up to 55 pounds. Ship inspections involve climbing into and out of the shipholds.

Factor 9. Work Environment

The work involves regular and recurring work in the field office and grain elevators, subject to potentially explosive concentrations of grain dust in rice mills, processed product plants, rail yards, dock loading and unloading facilities, and various warehouses.

Works at extreme heights in grain elevators and aboard ships. Must continuously take extensive safety precautions to avoid serious accidents resulting from these hazards. Some work is performed outdoors under varying weather conditions.